

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS CINCUSAFE AND EUCOM

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, MOPS, TU, GR, US

SUBJECT: POSSIBILITY OF TURKISH PREEMPTIVE ACTION

1. LOOKING AT THE PROBLEM OF THE U.S. ARMS CUTOFF FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TURKISH LEADERSHIP, IT IS EVIDENT THAT AN INDEFINITE PROLONGATION OF THE CUTOFF LEADING TO A DETERIORATION OF TURKISH MILITARY STRENGTH VIS-A-VIS GREECE (ESPECIALLY IN THE AIR) WOULD LOGICALLY MAKE SOME FORM OF PREEMPTIVE ACTION AGAINST GREECE AN INCREASINGLY TEMPTING OPTION FOR TURKEY. THE TURKISH HOPE MIGHT BE THAT BY EXECUTING SOME FORM OF MILITARY FAIT ACCOMPLI IN THE GREEK ISLANDS, THRACE, OR CYPRUS WHILE TURKISH FORCES STILL HOLD OVERALL SUPERIORITY OVER GREECE, TURKEY COULD (A) CHEW UP GREEK STRENGTH BEFORE IT BECAME TOO

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FORMIDABLE A CHALLENGE TO THE STEADILY WEAKENING TURKISH

STRENGTH, AND/OR (B) PUT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON GREECE TO SETTLE THEIR BILATERAL DISPUTES. THE ACTION ALSO COULD SERVE THE PURPOSES OF (A) DRAMATICALLY IMPRESSING TURKEY'S ALLIES WITH TURKISH DESPERATION AND (B) PRECIPITATING A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO SETTLE THE PROBLEMS OF CYPRUS AND THE AEGEAN (I.E., THE SO-CALLED "SADAT SOLUTION"), AND IN THE PROCESS ENDING TURKEY'S IMPENDING ISOLATION NOT MERELY FROM U.S. ASSISTANCE BUT, IN A BROADER SENSE, FROM THE WESTERN WORLD GENERALLY, BEFORE TURKEY SLIDES IRREVOCABLY INTO A MUCH WEAKENED MILITARY STATUS VIS-A-VIS GREECE.

2. TURKEY'S GROUND FORCES ARE SO MUCH LARGER THAN GREECE'S THAT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE GREECE CAN OUTMATCH TURKEY ON THE GROUND. BUT TURKEY'S CURRENT ADVANTAGES IN THE AIR AND PRESENT ROUGH EQUALITY WITH GREECE ON THE SEA WILL EVAPORATE FAR MORE QUICKLY. IT IS DANGEROUS TO ASSUME THAT TURKEY WILL SIT IDLY BY WHILE IT IS OVERTAKEN BY ITS ANCIENT ADVERSARY.

3. SO FAR WE HAVE HEARD PREEMPTIVE ACTION MENTIONED ONLY BY YOUNGER FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICERS DISCUSSING THEIR PERSONAL OPINIONS. HOWEVER, SEVERAL RECENT DEVELOPMENTS COULD BE INTERPRETED AS MOVES TOWARD RAISING THE TEMPERATURE OF TURKEY'S DISPUTES WITH GREECE:

A. THE TURKISH DEMARCHE CONCERNING THE ALLEGED MILITARIZATION OF SOME DODECANESE ISLANDS CONTRARY TO TREATY (STATE 65491).

B. THE ALLEGED OVERFLIGHTS AND THE FIRING INCIDENT OF WHICH GREECE HAS COMPLAINED (ATHENS 2281).

C. THE BORDER INCIDENT INVOLVING ATTEMPTED IMMIGRATION INTO TURKEY OF ETHNIC TURKS FROM WESTERN THRACE (ANKARA 2063).

D. THE TURKISH WARNING REGARDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF GREEK CYPRIOT TERRORISM (ANKARA 2388).

4. OBVIOUSLY, PREEMPTIVE ACTION WOULD REPRESENT A HIGH QUOTIENT INDEED OF RECKLESSNESS AND RISK. HOWEVER, PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE
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OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ARMS CUTOFF COULD ALSO IN TURKISH EYES CARRY EXTREMELY HIGH RISKS FOR TURKEY'S SECURITY AND PRIDE, AND FOR ITS DOMESTIC STABILITY. WE DOUBT THAT TURKEY WOULD RESORT TO SUCH ACTION WHILE THERE IS STILL A PROSPECT FOR REASONABLY TIMELY RESTORATION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. EVEN IF THIS PROSPECT SHOULD DISAPPEAR, THERE WOULD BE MANY COOLER HEADS HERE WHO WOULD ARGUE AGAINST SUCH A RECKLESS OPTION -- AND THEY COULD PREVAIL. HOWEVER, CONGRESSIONAL REJECTION OF THE

SCOTT-MANSFIELD BILL WILL OBVIOUSLY WEAKEN THEIR HAND.
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